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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO AFRICA;
HARARE

11. President George W. Bush's remarks on the challenges facing Zimbabwe during a joint news conference with his South African counterpart, Thabo Mbeki, in Pretoria made the top story during the state-run radio and television, ZBC/TV, news programs broadcast on July 9 at 2000 hours. The reporter aired sound bites from the two Presidents that centered on their shared position on how the political, economic and social turbulence in Zimbabwe could be resolved. This news clip was followed by another clip about an anti-Bush protest that declared him a dangerous warmonger. However, the station remained tight-lipped about another demonstration by about 100 supporters of the Movement for Democratic Change that waved placards, outside the U. S. Embassy in Pretoria, praising Bush for taking a tough line on Robert Mugabe.

12. Armed with the same story and a statement from Information Minister Jonathan Moyo's office, the July 10 editions of the two government-controlled dailies - "The Herald" and "Chronicle" - smiled all the way to the printers to run the following articles:

"Under headline "Bush shocks MDC" the "Herald" (07/10) carried the following articles under sub-headlines:

"U. S. President agrees with Mbeki on Zim" Itayi Musengeyi in Pretoria, South Africa reports:

"United States President George Bush has snubbed an MDC petition calling South African President Thabo Mbeki a 'dishonest broker' and urging the American Government to effect a 'regime change' in Zimbabwe. Speaking at a Press conference after meeting President Mbeki in Pretoria yesterday, the American President said he was of 'one mind' with his South African counterpart's approach to the Zimbabwean situation. . . Mr. Bush told reporters that he did not doubt the South African leader's capabilities as a mediator and that America supported him all the way. In an apparent climb-down from recent pronouncements that the U. S. would ask South Africa to pressure Zimbabwe to hold fresh presidential elections, Mr. Bush said he was convinced President Mbeki was working hard to help Harare resolve its problems. The U. S. leader also said Mr. Mbeki was an honest broker on the Zimbabwean issue. . ."

Under headline "Opposition party's antics laughable and childish" the "Herald" (07/10) carried the following article on page one:

"The British-sponsored MDC's predictable antics meant to catch the eye of U. S. President George W. Bush are vain, laughable and childish and can only confirm the MDC's infamous status as a puppet organization set up to protect and advance white interests, the Department of Information and Publicity in the President's Office said in a statement yesterday. 'No amount of falsehoods or sonorous verbiage can take away the fundamental truth that Zimbabwe today is a victim of her quest for genuine independence, democratic and full sovereign right over her resources, principally land. Everything else is extraneous. . .'. The department said President Bush's fleeting and perfunctory reference to Zimbabwe at his Press Conference is a loud climb-down by a President all along misled, but who now leaves the region better enlightened about issues at stake. . .'. The U. S. has also had to accept that Zimbabwe savors full and untrammelled sovereignty and thus will not accept false and synthetic solutions from outsiders however

powerful. The long and bloody years of independence struggle against white settler occupation have given this region a unique political trait which Bush cannot ignore, let alone contradict,' the statement read. . . ."

13. While the government-controlled press was gleefully reporting on the press conference, the independent daily "The Daily News" (07/10) settled on amplifying opposition MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai's message to Presidents Bush and Mbeki. The paper carried the story on page two under headline "Tsvangirai welcomes U. S. commitment to end crisis." Excerpts:

"Opposition MDC president Morgan Tsvangirai yesterday said he had welcomed commitment by American President George Bush and his South African counterpart Thabo Mbeki to seek an urgent end to Zimbabwe's crisis but the opposition leader insisted there was no dialogue yet between his party and the ruling ZANU PF party as claimed by Mbeki. . . . We are encouraged by the statements of President Thabo Mbeki . . . and President George W. Bush. . . that there has been a meeting of minds between the two presidents on the Zimbabwe crisis. . . . '"

SULLIVAN